

lied that the separation will be made by the legislative assembly. This matter would seem to be too delicate, too difficult to settle, and the people are not perhaps yet enlightened enough.

Leaving the canton of Geneva time to prepare its political and religious constitution, we will see what is passing in another part of Switzerland, in the canton of Aargau. There, an important, complicated affair, has excited for nearly a year the attention of the Helvetic confederation, and even of Europe. I speak of the affairs of the catholic convents. Some details will serve to explain to your readers the object of this debate.

The canton of Aargau contains 160,000 inhabitants. Of this number 80,000 are protestants, and 70,000 catholics. The majority is therefore on the side of the former; but the minority is strong enough to make a serious opposition. The protestants of Aargau achieved a democratic revolution in 1830, and since that period they have obtained a decisive preponderance in the councils of the government. Truth obliges me to say that they have not always used their power with moderation, and that the catholics have complained justly of the oppressions of the ruling party.

The constitution was changed in 1840. The catholics have long asked to be secured in the free exercise of their worship; but this right the protestants refuse to grant them. They pretend to apply rigidly the principle that the majority has the right to impose its terms upon the minority. The plan of a new constitution was submitted to the sanction of the people. There were about sixteen thousand votes to accept, and eleven thousand only to reject it. The constitution was then adopted.

Then the Romaniis, instead of submitting to the laws, resorted to violence. Several catholic priests and monks put themselves at the head of the conspiracy. They persuaded the catholic peasantry to take up arms, and form a separate state. The government sent one of the principal magistrates to suppress the revolt, but this officer was arrested and put in prison by the rebels. In the whole country the catholics rose in a body. The government of Aargau compelled to repel force by force, called out all the protestant militia. A battle took place near Pirmingen. The papists were beaten and dispersed. Encouraged by this success, and knowing the criminal intrigues of the monks, the grand-council of Aargau decided that all the convents of the canton should be suppressed, and their property confiscated.

Such is a faithful outline of this affair. It is not to be doubted that the monks, especially those of Muri, which is the principal convent, kindled the flame of insurrection. It is clear that these conspirators deserved punishment; for monks have no more right than others to stir up civil war. But is the government of Aargau authorised to suppress the monasteries, which were placed under the protection of the Helvetic confederation? Can it confiscate their goods? This point has been long debated in the Swiss diet. Foreign powers have interposed in the quarrel. The pope's nuncio wrote a threatening letter to the magistrates of the canton. The ambassador of the Emperor of Austria followed his example. But, in spite of these threats, the government of Aargau have continued to execute their plan, and it will be very difficult at present, not to say impossible, to restore the suppressed convents. We shall soon know what the next session of the diet will decide upon this important question.

The canton of Fribourg offers nothing remarkable since the letters I wrote you upon the abolition of the confederation of faith by the government. Only I learn by a letter from Lausanne, that the Christians of this city are divided into a great number of sects. Besides the Wesleyans and dissenters, there is established a congregation of people called *Plymouthites*. I do not know enough of the peculiar doctrines of this new sect, to speak to you of them at large. I know, however, that these *Plymouthites* perform their worship nearly like the Quakers: every one has the right to teach. Further, they regard it as a sacred duty not to be members of any religious society, any evangelical committee, so that those of them who labored with other Vaudoise Christians in the work of missions, religious tracts, and the Bible, now refuse to co-operate. All these internal schisms produce a bad effect upon men of the world, and weaken the hands of Christians. In union is strength.

The canton of Zurich goes on prosperously, since the popular revolution which overthrew the men who dared to appoint Strauss professor in theology. A new spirit animates the magistrates and teachers devoted to public instruction. This is an important fact; for Zurich is called the *citizens of Switzerland*, on account of the great number of intelligent men which it contains, and its influence is preponderating in a part of the Helvetic confederation.

But while the protestant cantons advance in liberty, the catholic cantons seem to retrograde towards the thocracy of the barbarous ages. It would be incredible, if we had not positive proofs, that there should be a return to forms which were thought to be abolished forever in Europe. The Catholic cantons, from a spirit of contradiction, or through fear of their protestant neighbors, have accepted the yoke of the priests, and obey tamely the decrees of jesuitism. I will cite some facts which will strike you with painful surprise.

The new government of the canton of Lucerne, in a long letter in Latin, has submitted its political constitution to the sanction and blessing of the holy see! Pope Gregory XVI will judge, in the last resort, of the laws which are proper for the inhabitants of Lucerne! So the State is placed distinctly, publicly, and before the world, under the authority of the church! Never, in times when the sway of the Vatican was most despotic, have the emperors of Germany, or the kings of France, or any independent government of Europe, submitted to such degradation before the holy see; and it is the *republicans* of Lucerne, who, in the nineteenth century, offer the example of this abject submission! You may believe that Gregory XVI will eagerly seize so good an occasion to raise the altar above all political powers! The pope of Rome will not forget that he is the successor of Gregory VII, who claimed to put his foot on the neck of emperors!

This is not all. The education of the people is wholly entrusted to priests in the canton of Lucerne. A new law subjects the teachers to the chances of a re-election, every four years; and we to those who shall have offended in any way whatever the curate of their village? They would inevitably be dismissed. The normal school is placed in a convent under the inspection of the monks. As to the subjects which shall be taught to the people, they are limited by law, to what is *strictly necessary*; that is, probably, to the study of the Romish catechism and some other books composed by the priests. Poor citizens of Lucerne! to what a depth of bigotry they have sunk!

Must we conclude from this that all the inhabitants of this canton are suttishly ignorant? No, there are at Lucerne, elsewhere, men of cultivated minds, freed from the prejudices of popery; but they are in subjection to the multitude who are themselves governed by the jesuits. Jesuitism does all these fine things, and will do others still, if the people do not at last oppose its spirit of invasion. Freemen! distrust, distrust the Jesuits! they are the most peridious and most determined enemies of all liberty.

The canton of Schwitz is equally a prey to priestly and monkish usurpations. The jesuits are now erecting at the gate of the principal city of the canton, a monastery, a church and a boarding school. They have procured female of the Ursulines to direct the education of girls, and reserve to themselves the education of the boys. The mountaineers of Schwitz behold all this without alarm; they tamely hold out their hands to receive the chains of this theocracy, but they will one day repent not having better defended their old independence.

This retrograde movement is especially apparent in Fribourg. There, for several years, the jesuits have been all powerful. They have erected the largest establishment of education which they possess, I believe, in all Europe. More than 800 young men, sent for the most part by the families of the nobility in France, are placed under their instruction. The council of state and the representative assembly of Fribourg adopt no measure which is not approved by the jesuits. The whole city, with its numerous churches, its bigoted habits, resembles a vast convent.

The most strange and stupid superstitions are still in honor at Fribourg. You may judge by some examples which I borrow from the letter of a Christian who has traversed the canton.

On visiting a chapel, he remarked an old woman, who was fingering a *rosary of beads*, while her eyes were wandering to every object around her.

—What are you doing there, good woman? said he.
—I am doing a *neuvaine*.
—A *neuvaine*, what is that?
—I come here nine days in succession, to say nine *paters* and nine *ave's* for persons who employ me for this purpose.
—Who employ you for this purpose?
—I say prayers for those who pay me money. I ask but five baiz (12 cents), for a *neuvaine*; you see it is not very dear. When I say a *pater* for the rich, they pay me more; we must all live, you know.

Here is a woman who is a sort of praying-machine, and who makes a trade of praying for money! O gospel of Jesus Christ! Holy and pure doctrines of my God, what have ye become in the hands of men who call themselves the representatives of Jesus upon earth?

At the door of the cathedral of Fribourg, our traveller perceived a horrible picture, upon which are painted men so buried in flames that only their heads could be seen, and above was this inscription: *For souls in purgatory!* Near it is a large chest, where those who pass by are invited to cast in their money, which pays for saying mass to deliver these poor souls. What a dreadful traffic in the judgments of God in eternity!

I could cite other facts of the same kind, but my courage fails me to look into this sink of superstitions. Ah! let us

pray the Lord soon to cause the light of his Word to shine upon these unhappy souls who are sitting in the shadow of death!
Accept, &c. G. de F.

RELIGIOUS STATE OF SWITZERLAND.
(From our Correspondent.)

MONTAUBAN, Tarn-and-Garonne, }
December 29, 1841. }

Revolution in Geneva.—Affair of the Convents of Aargau.—State of the cantons of Fribourg and Zurich.—Triumph of popery in the cantons of Lucerne, Schwitz, and Fribourg.—Singular Romish superstitions.

Switzerland seems designed by Providence to exhibit in her religious and political institutions the strangest contrasts, just as it presents within its narrow territory all the varieties of different climates. If you climb the summits of the Swiss mountains, you will experience the icy temperature of Lapland or Siberia; if you go down to the bottom of her valleys, you breathe the warm and balmy air of Italy, or the Ionian Islands. There is the same diversity in its moral state. Traverse some cantons, and you will see radicalism triumphant; go a few miles farther, and you will find the aristocratic institutions of the dark ages.

This contrast is especially striking in religious matters. Switzerland is the country of Europe where the jesuits possess the most influence, and at the same time where the liberty of protestantism is best established. To witness these extremes you have only to pass from one canton to another. In a single day, travelling in this country, you may see the extreme of monkish despotism, and the progress of religious independence. No where else, on the face of the globe, is there such a strange phenomenon.

But what then, you will ask, is the Helvetic Confederation? How can states, so opposite in their religion, laws and manners, be united? I reply: The Helvetic confederation is hardly more than nominal; it has no real and strong bonds. The cantons are almost wholly independent of each other; maintaining each its own sovereignty with great jealousy; and if they continue to form together a single country, it is from their common interest and from necessity. Should war occur in Europe, the Swiss would wish for the triumph of liberal opinions, others of despotism; but they would agree to maintain their national independence.

Politics are so mixed with religion in this country, that these two subjects will recur in turn to me, while describing the condition of the different cantons, and your readers will derive from this sketch, I hope, useful reflections.

The journals of Europe have apprized you that a revolution took place, last month, in the canton of Geneva. It was an event wholly unexpected. The government of Geneva was always tyrannical; its character was paternal, and the opulent families who occupy the offices of state receive but a small salary, so that the people were lightly taxed. But the radicals were discontented with being excluded from public office; and under pretence of acquiring more liberal laws, they stirred up the shop keepers and mechanics, who were joined by many strangers. The militia, being called upon to defend the government, refused to obey, and the revolution was effected with the utmost ease, without a drop of blood shed.

At the moment I am writing you, a new representative assembly is engaged in forming a constitution for the canton of Geneva. The radicals are not a majority in the Legislature, but it is probable that the fear of exciting popular commotions will induce the deputies to establish very liberal institutions. It remains to see if this country will be more happy under new laws, than it was under the old. It may well be doubted.

Religion will feel the effects of this revolution. Protestantism has been, for three centuries, one of the foundations of the prosperity of Geneva. Calvin had, in concert with the government, remodelled every thing on a religious basis, and though piety has declined in this city, it is certain that the institutions of the illustrious reformer contributed still to sustain the good order of society in Geneva. But now, all is set at naught, and it may be that this ancient capital of protestantism will be ruled by catholics.

To understand this, it should be remembered that, since 1814, several villages of Savoy have been reunited to the canton of Geneva. But all these villages are *Romanist*. At present, two fifths of the Genevese population belong to popery. Besides, a multitude of strangers, almost all French or Italian, that is to say almost all papists, come every year to settle in Geneva. It would not be surprising then if, after some time, the majority of the inhabitants of this country should be catholics. What a triumph for Rome! what shouts of joy for popery, if this should happen! But what ruin to the old citizens of Geneva! The city of Calvin would then sink again into the obscurity from which the genius of the great Reformer brought it forth.

So long as the government was in the hands of the old Genevese families, this danger was not to be feared; for all these families are protestant. But now that the power is wrested from them, where will be the barrier against the invasions of popery? The most intelligent people of Geneva are uneasy about the future; and the late revolution, considered in this point of view, is very ominous.

Some of the citizens have asked for a separation of Church and State. An anonymous pamphlet has been published entitled: *Letter of an American*, advocating this separation. You may well think that it is not a real American who has written this pamphlet; but the author has taken this name, because he advocates principles which are established in the United States in regard to the independence of the church. This pamphlet has produced quite a sensation. But is not be-